



Country Reports on Terrorism 2015

Bureau of Counterterrorism
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Chapter 2. Country Reports: Western Hemisphere Overview

ARGENTINA

Overview: Argentina maintained capabilities for confronting terrorism at the federal level, and directed efforts to address border security challenges along its remote northern and northeastern borders, which include the Tri-Border Area where Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay meet, an area where terrorism financing occurs. Senior Argentine officials made statements condemning violence wrought by ISIL and urging action to alleviate humanitarian suffering in Syria and Iraq. It is possible small numbers of Argentine citizens may have sought to travel to Syria and Iraq to join ISIL. U.S. law enforcement and security cooperation with Argentina focused on information sharing as well as some training funded by the Antiterrorism Assistance program.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: Argentina's Antiterrorism Law of 2007, modified in 2011, serves as a supplement to the criminal code for the prosecution of terrorism cases. Multiple security agencies maintained specialized law enforcement units that have substantial capabilities to respond to terrorist incidents. One of those agencies underwent a wide-scale replacement of personnel and reorganization in the first part of the year that degraded its counterterrorism capabilities. The Argentine government's Security Ministry chaired meetings of the Internal Security Council to coordinate between federal and provincial security institutions. The outgoing administration took steps to implement the transition of the criminal justice system from an inquisitorial to an accusatorial model.

The investigation into the 1994 terrorist bombing of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association community center in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people encountered difficulties. Outgoing President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner defended a "truth commission" agreed on between Argentina and Iran in January 2013 against a prosecutor's legal filing claiming the president had in fact subverted the investigation. The prosecutor was discovered dead in his apartment in January, and his filing was later dismissed by a judge. The outgoing president maintained that the talks with Iran were intended to clarify Iran's alleged role in the bombing, for which several former Iranian cabinet-level officials have outstanding INTERPOL Red Notices. On December 10, Mauricio Macri assumed the presidency of Argentina. The Macri administration issued a press release stating that the Argentine government was "firmly determined" to maintain INTERPOL Red Notices issued against the one Lebanese and five Iranian suspects in the case.

An Argentine court declared the agreement between Iran and Argentina unconstitutional in May 2014. As a superior court reviewed the decision in June, the outgoing government used a controversial new law to remove a judge from the panel and appoint a temporary judge in his place. The Argentine-Jewish community and the U.S. government expressed skepticism regarding the Argentina-Iran dialogue, and indeed it failed to advance the investigation. In December, the incoming Macri administration announced it would cease the executive's challenge of judicial decisions against the pact. The same month, the administration appointed a state secretary with Cabinet rank to carry forward the investigation of the 1994 attack.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Argentina is a member of the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (GAFILAT), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body. Its financial intelligence unit, Unidad de Informacion Financiera (UIF), is a member of the Egmont Group. During 2014, the last period for which data is available, the UIF identified seven possible instances of terrorism financing. Two were submitted to the Attorney General's Office, and the remaining five were under investigation. These cases involve the capture of 11 terrorist fugitives, all from the last military dictatorship, and eight resolutions to freeze assets. At the close of 2015, the Federal Prosecutor in charge of Economic Crimes identified a new potential terrorism-financing case regarding a Syrian national involved in a number of suspicious transactions in the Tri-Border Area (with Brazil and Paraguay). That case was proceeding through the justice system at year's end.

While the Government of Argentina has established the legal authorities and structures necessary to identify and pursue terrorism financing, results in the form of targets identified, assets seized, and cases prosecuted have been minimal. In December, the new administration appointed a new head of the UIF and considered proposals to create a special counsel reporting directly to the government to combat money laundering and terrorism financing, establish an inter-agency anti-money laundering/counterterrorism financing task force, and develop a new national risk-based strategy founded on a revised national risk analysis. Such measures, if implemented effectively, could help the country move closer to international standards and improve program effectiveness.

For further information on money laundering and financial crimes, see the *2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report, Volume II, Money Laundering and Financial Crimes*: <http://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/index.htm>.

International and Regional Cooperation: Argentina participated in the OAS Inter-American Committee against Terrorism and the Southern Common Market Special Forum on Terrorism. Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay coordinated law enforcement efforts in the Tri-Border Area via their Trilateral Tri-Border Area Command.